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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

25X1A

COUNTRY Honduras

SUBJECT Port Information: Tela

PLACE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)DATE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)

DATE (OF INFO.)

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SOURCE Merchant mariner, officer on a ship which called at Tela, Honduras on 15 Dec 53.

The Navy interviewing officer assigned an evaluation of "B-2" to the report, stating that source had previously furnished his general observations on subject port [] and that he was thereafter briefed in advance on more specific subjects of interest, which are herein reported.

[THE OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE FURNISHED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO CIA FOR IAC DISSEMINATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 3 c OF NSCID #7 (DIO, 8ND No 17-54).]

1. The following information is based on personal observations of the source.
2. Boarding Inspection The boarding party was comprised of four officials: Port Sanitary Doctor, Port Captain's representative, Police representative, and Customs representative. The boarding inspection was completed in 30 to 45 minutes.
3. Harbor Craft Source reports only one small line-handling motor boat constructed of wood and powered by a 10-horsepower gasoline motor. No signals were shown.
4. Communications Radio station located on top of the main office building is owned by Tropical Radio. Call letter is "C," and service is continuous from 0600 to 1800 and whenever requested. Station is operated on 250 watts from 10 minutes past the hour until 20 minutes past the hour, broadcasting for one minute then silent for two minutes. Telephone equipment is of the local battery type and is considered sufficient for serving 773 subscribers. Efficiency of the telephone service is good. The telegraph company is operated by the Honduran Government and offers 24-hour service with all telegraphic stations in the country.
5. Railroad Facilities Over-all condition of railroad equipment is good. Equipment includes oil-burning locomotives, all-steel freight cars, and all-steel passenger cars. An average of 20 trains pass through each day. Each train averages 40 cars and has a maximum of 135 loads. Track is double and six miles long. Passenger station facilities are meager, but passenger service is available daily within the farm area. A combination railroad and machine shop has adequate equipment for all types of medium to heavy repair work requiring

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machine tools. Railroad yards and a roundhouse are located at Tela and Puerto Cortés. Facilities are adequate for maintenance operations of the locomotives. Average car capacities are: box cars, 20 tons; flat cars, 20 tons; banana cars, 10 tons; tank cars, 25 tons, and ice cars (insulated), 30 tons.

6. Pier Facilities Subject port has one pier, which is owned and operated by the Tela Railroad Company, a subsidiary of the United Fruit Company. It is 500 feet long with a 1500 foot approach, projects out from the beach in a northerly direction and is served by a main line railroad connection having four sidings on the pier deck. Two of the tracks are covered by a shed while the remaining two run along either side of the shed. Gage of track is 42 inches. Cargo is handled directly to or from railroad boxcars or flatcars and ship's holds by use of ship's gear, inasmuch as there are no cranes or handling facilities available. There are no warehouses on the pier. The pier will accommodate two ocean-going ships at the same time, one on the west side and another on the east side. Depth of water alongside is 32 feet at the inshore end and 38 feet at the offshore end. Distance from water level to pier deck is 12 to 13 feet. Tidal range in the area is 10 to 12 inches. Fuel loading facilities consist of the following: six-inch hose for fuel oil delivering 600 barrels per hour; four-inch hose for diesel oil delivering 250 barrels per hour. There is also a small electric pump installed on shore for the delivery of diesel oil for motor vessels. The hose used on this pump is four-inch delivering approximately 200 barrels per hour. Storage tanks are located approximately 1200 feet from the end of the pier.
7. Stevedores Current number of stevedores available is adequate to meet present requirements. Stevedores work 24 hours a day in eight-hour shifts. The average hatch gang can work about 10 short tons per hour.
8. Building Materials Sand and gravel for building purposes are available locally from rivers and gravel beds. Crushed rock is not available, and cement must be imported. Lumber is supplied locally for the most part and wooden pilings are treated locally. Steel plate, wire, fencing, and other building materials are imported.
9. Water Mountain streams provide the local water supply, which is brought into Tela by a 10-inch pipeline. There are no reservoirs or pumping stations in the system. Water is purified by chlorine treatment by the high pressure application method, using the Everson series 3600 equipment and the type "U" aterelator. This water system treats 70 thousand gallons per hour. Distribution is by pipeline; service is fair.
10. Health Conditions For prevention of malaria the Camoquin Hydrochloride (Parke-Davis) and Aralen Diphosphate (Winthrop-Stearns) treatments are applied. For dysentery the Aralen Diphosphate (Winthrop-Stearns) and Carbaron (Lilly) treatments are used. There are three hospitals in this area. The first has 300 beds, the second nine beds, and the third seven beds. Medical services available are general surgery, general medicine, obstetrics, pediatrics, gynecology, orthopedics, X-ray, laboratory, blood bank, pharmacies, line dispensaries, and out-patient clinics. The total number of doctors is 13.
11. Political Situation Source, in commenting on current political conditions in Honduras, stated: In 1932, Carías was elected president on the Blue Party ticket which marked the end of Red Party government and the beginning of Blue Party rule which has continued up to the present time. After his election, Carías set up a dictatorial regime which lasted 16 years. During that time a law was passed, with his approval, limiting the president to one six-year term. In 1948, Gálvez, who was hand-picked by Carías as Blue Party candidate, was elected president. The Red Party candidate withdrew from the race a few days before balloting took place; the reason for his withdrawal is unknown. Source states that the latter could have been elected had he not withdrawn and had he won the large independent vote. Current indications are of a gradual weakening of

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the Blue Party, due to an internal split between the Carías and Gálvez factions. The growing relative strength of the Red Party is reflected in the results of a recent election of "Alcaldes" in the outlying districts. In those elections the Carías-backed Blue candidates won 47 thousand votes, the Gálvez-backed candidates 42 thousand votes, and Red Party candidates won 32 thousand votes. The judicial and legislative branches are reported to be largely controlled by Carías but Gálvez is attempting to break the ex-president's hold on these branches before the end of his term. This is the alleged cause of the current Blue Party split and gradual decline in power. Though there have been some traces of Communist activity, almost nothing is known of them. It is said that all Communists are members of the Red Party, but that the Red Party is not all Communist.

12. Labor Unions The only union activity is conducted by the "Seaman's Union" under the managing directorship of Conzesa, ex-mayor of Puerto Cortés. Conzesa has a fine reputation and is considered a good man. This union handles all hiring of stevedores and other dock workers, as well as of crews.

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